

# USA TIMING

I'd like to ask some questions about USA timing. Why did DOJ fire the USAs it did when it did? TPM's newest member, Laura McGann, reports that Todd Graves was fired "11 months before" the other USAs were fired in December, putting his firing sometime in January 2006. Tom Heffelfinger was ousted (but not, according to him, fired) in February 2006. DOJ had ready replacements for both of them, Brad Schlozman and Rachel Paulose, respectively, and those replacements took over almost immediately.

In place in plenty of time for the mid-term elections.

But why pull the trigger on MO and (possibly) on MN, out of the wide collection of swing states? The short answer is that both had a close Senate race last year—or it looked to be close in January, when the USAs were ousted (though arguably, MO didn't look like it was in play for the Democrats until much later). But that still raises the question, why not oust Margaret Chiara in January, too, to increase the chances of beating Debbie Stabenow, who was always on the list of most vulnerable Senators? Of those listed on Sampson's January 9 list, Chiara and Cummins are the two other USAs from swing states. In AR, there was no Senate race, and besides they had to wait to fire Cummins until Griffin finished his deployment to Iraq. But for MI, Rachel Brand was presumably available in January.